

Website: <http://faculty.deanza.fhda.edu/tarikhishmael/>

American Government and Politics

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course. As such, we will cover a great deal of material, but will not go into the depths that are available to you through more advanced Political Science course offerings. We will lay the basic foundation for understanding the creation, development, and perpetuation of our fundamental political institutions. This will be done with an initial focus on our national government, and a subsequent focus on our state government.

At the outset we will review the historical record of the founding of the American body politic, and will quickly move to a structural (what is the government made of), functional (how does its many parts interact), and practical (what is my role as an individual citizen) analysis. This course will expose enrolled students to the text of the United States and California State Constitutions; the evolution and interpretations of their texts; constitutional principles; key and current events; and finally, to the prospects and possibilities for a more inclusive and democratic society within the set framework.

Political Science 1 fulfills the General Education A.A. degree requirement (Segment IV: Social and Behavioral Sciences) for Foothill College; the General Education Breadth requirement for all California State Universities (CSUs); and the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) for all CSUs and UCs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed for any student who wishes to make a serious study of these issues, and is prepared to do the extensive reading, writing, and research that are course requirements. However, the most important objective will always be the encouragement and development of critical reading, writing, and thinking skills.

This course is for five units of academic credit in a distance learning format. It adheres to all of the dictates of the promulgated De Anza College policies outlined in the Schedule of Classes, and found in the current college catalog. Of immense importance and emphasis are the policies attendant to Academic Integrity and Academic Freedom. Strict adherence will be followed. Please read these passages in the most sober and careful manner. Unlike much of our contemporaneous society, in this course we will agree, disagree, and agree to disagree while maintaining the decorum befitting a fine institution of higher learning.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

SLO 1: Students will evaluate how political decisions are shaped by institutions and processes.

SLO 2: Students will assess the impact of political decisions on individuals and groups.

SLO 3: Students will demonstrate the capacity to effectively participate in the political process.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

In most cases, the instructor will develop the subjects of the sessions and place them in proper perspective so that a meaningful understanding can be shared among the reader (students), and the instructor. In these required readings, the subject will be viewed from various sides, and a comparison will be made between what was in the writing prompt, and what was written in the required and general references relating to the subject or event. Remember, your response can be no better than the sources you rely on. In this course the student will be required to participate through formal and informal writings (ie. Canvas postings). The grade the student receives will result from a combination of writing assignments, and objective (multiple choice) examinations.

It is absolutely imperative that students respect the deadlines in this course. I can be amazingly flexible when there is a legitimate basis for an extension, but I can also be amazingly rigid when there is no basis. Some examples of legitimate basis include personal illness (that is verified through medical documentation), personal matters like military or court ordered obligations (with documentary verification), personal matters like a death in the family (but be prepared to submit an obituary), and other compelling reasons.

Due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), I am open to an increased amount of flexibility, but be ready to take personal responsibility (accept the consequences) if you waited until a few minutes before the deadline, and could not submit your work. Be mindful of the negative impacts of unsuitable environments, distractions, etc. If you experience a technical problem, and could not submit your work, let me know immediately. Be sure to use reliable networks and equipment to get the job done.

I will be available through Canvas, email, or through the possibility of Zoom meetings. In fact, I would love for students to join me in dialogue around the “seismic shifts” in our current political landscape.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The Student Success Center offers individual and group tutoring, as well as several types of workshops. Students who use our services succeed at much higher rates than those who do not. As you may know, De Anza now also offers free online tutoring with Smarthinking.

Need help? De Anza's Student Success Center offers free online tutoring and workshops! Visit <http://www.deanza.edu/studentssuccess> for more information.

Student Success Center Resources are available online to all De Anza students on Canvas: <https://deanza.instructure.com/enroll/MAF7Y8>

TEXT:

There is one required text, and it has zero cost to students. I have posted a pdf of our text that can be found on Canvas under “Files”.

American Government– this online free text is provided by Openstax.

“Download for free at <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-2e>”

SOME ESSENTIAL INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES:

californiachoices.org
govtrack.us
pewresearch.org
politifact.com
ppic.org
usdebtclock.org

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{SEP}

In order to receive full G.E. credit (attaining at least a “C” as a final course grade) each student must score over 50% of possible points in every Performance Evaluation/Assessment area.

PROPER PREPARATION PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

1) Written Assignments: 50% = 500 potential points [5 assignments worth 100 points each]

2) Objective Examinations: 50% = 500 potential points [1 Midterm worth 200 points each, and a Final Examination worth 300 points] – The Midterm (90 minutes timed) will be comprised of 100 multiple choice items that are largely (though not exclusively) taken from the Study Guides found on Canvas (under “Files”). The Final Examination (60 minutes timed) will be comprised of 50 multiple choice items (it is cumulative).

Also, many items will be developed from the required readings (regardless of source) in our course.

Grading Scale: is an approximation of final grading outcomes. Frequently the final grade is higher than the scaling below, but it is never lower.

A+ = 950-1000 pts A = 900-949 A- = 875-899 B+ = 850-874 B = 800-849
B- = 775-799 C+ = 750-774 C = 675-749 D+ = 650-674
D = 600-649 D- = 575-599 F = below 575 pts

TOPICS/SUBTOPICS

Power, Authority, Legitimacy/Federalism

Madisonian model, separation of powers, checks and balances, republicanism, federalism, limited government. Any contradictions? The effect of authority on conflict resolution (techniques: force, negotiation, compromise, adjudication, rational analysis), Red State, Blue State (Regional Differences), Manifest Destiny, Territorial Acquisition through war, conquest, fraud, diplomacy, and purchase, No Child Left Behind Act (Unfunded Mandates), Immigration Reform, 10th Amendment (McCulloch v. Maryland)

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

The Bill of Rights, 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 23rd, 24th, and 26th Amendments, Individual influence, Korematsu v. U.S., Govt. response to political movements: Shay's Rebellion, Alien and Sedition Acts, Social Movements: Abolitionism, Suffragism, Labor, Civil Rights, Anti War, Black Power, Women's, Gay/Lesbian, Disability, Environmental (Earth Day, 1972), Equal Protection Analysis, Black Lives Matter, Me Too Movement

Public Opinion/Media/Interest Groups/ Political Parties/Campaigns/Elections

Pervasive Ignorance, Culture Wars, 4 media sources, 1996 Telecommunications Act, TalkRadio and Spin Doctors, Polling, 1st Amendment, DoubleSpeak, statistics, representative and random samples, margin of error, propaganda (e.g. "war on terror", quotas, patriotism, political correctness, etc.) Images, symbols, and myths and their role in formulating nationalistic feelings, Proposition 13's impact on CA governance, the electoral process, participatory enough? The Electoral College, A Nation Divided, "winner takes all", campaign finance reform, referenda/initiatives, recalls, term limits, the elections of 1824, 1876, 2000, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016, the Tea Party "Movement", the "Alt-Right"

Congress/The Presidency

Comparison with parliamentary system, two parties, or one hegemony?, re-apportionment, redistricting, filibuster, cloture, supermajorities, types of committees, how a bill becomes a law, porkbarreling, role of oversight, the nuclear option, taxing and spending, deficits, The scope of presidential power, re-visiting authority and its sources, the Monroe Doctrine, Roosevelt Corollary, Executive Order 9066, FDR court packing, the Imperial Presidency, Watergate, U.S. v. Nixon, Carter Administration, the Reagan "Revolution", military build-ups and deficit spending, Iran-Contra Gate, line item veto, the Clinton impeachment, unitary executive theory, executive privilege, Guantanamo Bay Detainees, rendition, Blackwater (Xe), signing statements, Trump (and his impeachment)

The Judiciary

The 13 Circuits, the federal bench, judicial appointments (Bork and Thomas), the Supreme Court, the establishment of judicial review (cf. Marbury v. Madison, the Pentagon Papers, the impending Nixon impeachment), infamous cases: Dred Scott v. Sandford, Plessy v. Ferguson, Korematsu v. U.S., Brown v. Bd. of Education, Miranda v. Arizona, Roe v. Wade, Bakke v. UC Regents, Jones

v. Clinton, Bush v. Gore, the current make-up of the Supreme Court, rule of 4, types of opinions, state system structure, Garland/Gorsuch/Kavanaugh, recent decisions

Domestic/Economic Policy

The new federalism (unfunded mandates), one nation?, housing policy, health policy, education policy, tax policy, fiscal policy, immigration policy

Foreign/Defense Policy

Marshall Plan, MAD, Iron Curtain, Cold War, Domino theory, containment, military/industrial complex, War Powers Act, capitalism and globalism's impact, AUMF, the war on terror's impact, the global police mentality, the only superpower, picking our patsies/using our proxies, India/Pakistan, China/Taiwan/North Korea, Israel, Russia, the European Union, NATO, Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran, the black budget, the United Nations and the arrogance of unilateral, preemptive actions, the human bomb, Powell Doctrine, ISIS/ISIL

This syllabus is subject to change with fair notice.

Please see Canvas for greater detail of assignments required during this course.